

SPECIAL BENEFIT DISTRICTS IN WASHINGTON STATE

Definition:

The Revised Code Washington (RCW) has no explicit definition of Special Benefit District (SBD) or Special Purpose District. By convention, an SBD is any government subdivision created by the county legislature that is not a town or city. The SBD should be created to provide a service or to expand or increase an existing service.

Special Benefit Districts have their own governing bodies. The composition of the governing body should also be defined in the authorizing statute approved by the county legislature.

Cultural Arts, Stadium and Convention District

Chapter 67.38 of RCW is the chapter dealing with Cultural Arts, Stadiums and Convention Districts. The state defines these districts as valuable and adding to the cultural tourism industry.

Benefits

A Cultural Arts, Stadium and Convention District (CASCD) is a quasi municipal corporation with its own governing body. The benefits of being a quasi-municipal corporation are that the CASCD:

- has the power to contract with the federal government
- is eligible for state matching funds
- can contract to “acquire by purchase, gift or grant and to lease, convey, construct, add to, improve, replace, repair, maintain, and operate cultural arts, stadium and convention facilities and properties within the district”¹
- issue general obligation bonds for capital construction
- issue revenue bonds
- levy property taxes
- use tax incremental financing as stipulated under the TIF Act.

Limitations

A CASCD must be created via specific protocols:

- 1) the county legislature can adopt a resolution calling for a public hearing about the proposed district,
- 2) two cities within the county can adopt resolutions calling for public hearings about the proposed district, or
- 3) a petition that is signed by no less than ten percent of the registered voters within the boundaries of the proposed district can be filed with the county.

¹ RCW chapter 67.38.100